



Kent
Wildlife Trust

Welcome

to Kent Wildlife Trust

Volunteer Handbook



kentwildlifetrust.org.uk

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Kent Wildlife Trust, Tyland Barn, Sandling, Maidstone, Kent ME14 3BD

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Welcome to Volunteering

We are delighted that you are joining our wonderful team of volunteers working across Kent.

You are now part of a community of people who all play a part in connecting others with nature and protecting wildlife for the future.

Volunteers are essential to our success as an organisation and have been helping us to deliver our vision for a Wilder Kent. By 2030 we want to see Kent's land, sea, rivers and towns full of healthy wildlife, and you are vital to helping us achieve this.

This handbook includes all of the general information you will need to know about volunteering with Kent Wildlife Trust. As well as outlining what you need to know when starting out with us, we also hope it will prove a useful reference document as you progress. We hope that you find your time with us rewarding.

Welcome – and thank you!

Volunteering with the Trust

What do volunteers do?

Kent Wildlife Trust volunteers help us in many different ways. From practical work on our nature reserves, inspiring people through our Wild about Gardens programme, supporting on Roadside Nature Reserves, greeting those who come to our Visitor Centres, volunteering in our offices to helping young people to engage with wildlife, they are all making a huge contribution to the work of the organisation.

We have six categories of volunteering you can get involved with:

Office & Administration

Practical Outdoor

Livestock Checking

Freshwater & Marine

People Engagement

Wildlife Surveys

Do check the current vacancies on our website as these will contain descriptions about the range of roles you can carry out. If you do have any questions please contact us at volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk.

Who can volunteer?

Our volunteers are from all over Kent (and sometimes beyond) and they come from all walks of life, bringing a variety of skills and experience. If you are interested in our natural environment, inspiring people to value our wildlife or just getting some exercise in the great outdoors, we will have something for you.



Kent Wildlife Trust encourages volunteers of all ages as long as they are able to take part safely. Young people under 16 years of age are welcome on most volunteer tasks, but they must be accompanied by a parent or guardian. Those aged 16 and 17 can volunteer without the need for an accompanying adult but are required to have written consent (signed form) for this to occur.

Do volunteers have to be members?

Volunteering with us is open to members and non-members of Kent Wildlife Trust. However you choose to support us, we are extremely grateful.

If you would like to find out more about becoming a member as well as a volunteer, visit kentwildlifetrust.org.uk/support-us/become-member or give our friendly team an email membership@kentwildlife.org.uk. Members receive a range of exclusive benefits, including our Wilder Kent magazine, which is packed with inspiring features and hints and tips to help you get closer to wildlife.

Why volunteer with us?

We are grateful to have people from all walks of life helping to achieve our goals through the various volunteering roles that are available here at Kent Wildlife Trust.



Volunteering benefits

Volunteering for a cause that you believe in can be hugely rewarding, both physically and mentally, and can open new doors to friendship, knowledge and employment.

Just some of the benefits:

- Personal satisfaction that you have made a real difference.
- Safeguard nature and wildlife for future generations.
- Meet people, make new, likeminded friends and become part of a knowledgeable team.
- Enjoy new experiences and learn new life and craft skills.
- Utilise and share existing knowledge and feel valued.
- Improve your health and wellbeing, physically and mentally.
- Develop employability skills and further your character.
- Spend time in the fresh air and appreciate nature.
- For those seeking future employment, develop new skills and enrich your CV.

Who are we?

Kent Wildlife Trust is the leading wildlife and conservation charity in the South East and one of **46 national Wildlife Trusts**. For over **65 years** we have been saving and improving habitats to ensure that Kent's wildlife can thrive and people can enjoy the natural world around them. With your help as a volunteer, we can continue to do this for generations to come.

Our Wilder Kent 2030 Vision

Where nature is in recovery and being valued as a **critical human life support system**.

Overall impact measure

30% of Kent's land and sea displaying increased climate resilience and containing abundant wildlife.



We defend and restore

Ensure that the Kent Wildlife Trust Group (KWTG) is delivering the highest possible impact in the face of habitat loss and climate change.



We inspire and collaborate

Build a groundswell of support for Wilder Kent 2030, scaling-up our engagement to reach a larger, more diverse range of people.



We strengthen and grow

Diversify KWTG's income sources and strengthen its systems, whilst operating sustainably.



Our mission:

To work with people to restore, save and enhance our natural heritage.

Kent Wildlife Trust is working to ensure that our wildlife is protected and restored, now and in the future. We work to help organisations, people and communities connect to nature and care for our natural places.

Through membership and wider communication, we aim to develop lifelong relationships with Kent Wildlife Trust and provide opportunities for people to take action for wildlife.



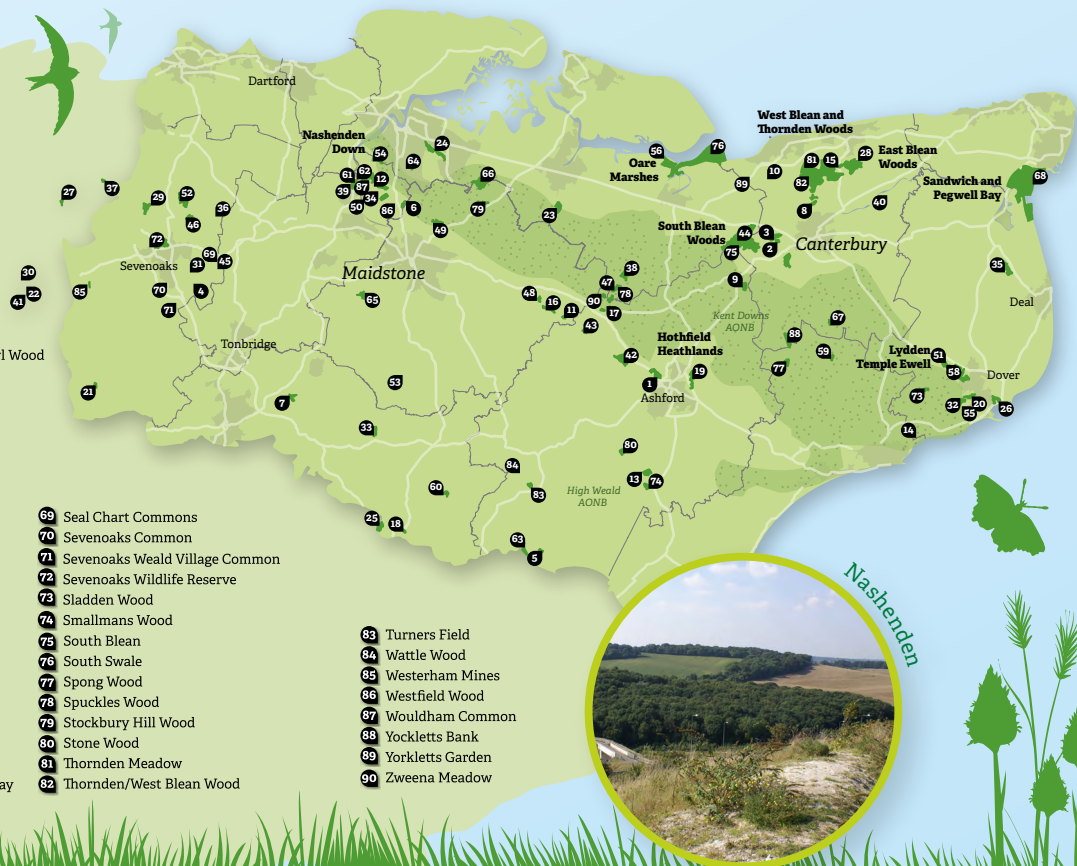
Where do we work?

MAP KEY

 KWT reserves

RESERVES KEY

- | | |
|--------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1 Ashford Warren/Hoads Wood | 36 Heather Corrie Vale |
| 2 Bigbury Wood | 37 Hewitts Chalk Bank |
| 3 Bigbury Camp/Howfield Wood | 38 Holbeam Banks |
| 4 Bitchet Common | 39 Holborough Marsh |
| 5 Blackburn Fields | 40 Hoplands |
| 6 Blue Bell Hill | 41 Hosey Common |
| 7 Brenchley Wood | 42 Hothfield Heathlands |
| 8 Broad Oak Woods | 43 Hurst wood |
| 9 Broadham Down | 44 Hunstead Wood |
| 10 Brooklands Garden | 45 Ivy Hatch |
| 11 Bull Heath | 46 Kemsing Down |
| 12 Burham Down | 47 Kennelling Wood/Bowl Wood |
| 13 Burnt Oak Wood | 48 Kiln Wood |
| 14 Capel Le Ferne | 49 The Larches |
| 15 Childs Forstal | 50 Lower Culland |
| 16 Chilston Ponds and Pines | 51 Lydden Temple Ewell |
| 17 Cole Wood | 52 Maggie Bottom |
| 18 Collingwood | 53 Marden Meadow |
| 19 Conningbrook | 54 Nashenden |
| 20 Coombe Down | 55 Nemo Down |
| 21 Cowden Pound | 56 Oare Marshes |
| 22 Crockham Hill Common | 57 Oare Meadow |
| 23 Cromers Wood | 58 Old Park Hill |
| 24 Darland Bank | 59 Park Gate Down |
| 25 Delmonden | 60 Parsonage Wood |
| 26 Dover Castle | 61 Peter's Pit |
| 27 Downe Bank | 62 Polhill Bank |
| 28 East Blean Wood | 63 Potman's Heath |
| 29 Fackenden Down | 64 Princes Bank |
| 30 Farley Common | 65 Quarry Wood |
| 31 Fawke Common & Godden Green | 66 Queendown Warren |
| 32 Gorse Hill | 67 Quilters Wood |
| 33 The Gill | 68 Sandwich & Pegwell Bay |
| 34 Greater Culand | 69 Seal Chart Commons |
| 35 Ham Fen | 70 Sevenoaks Common |
| | 71 Sevenoaks Weald Village Common |
| | 72 Sevenoaks Wildlife Reserve |
| | 73 Sladden Wood |
| | 74 Smallmans Wood |
| | 75 South Blean |
| | 76 South Swale |
| | 77 Spong Wood |
| | 78 Spuckles Wood |
| | 79 Stockbury Hill Wood |
| | 80 Stone Wood |
| | 81 Thornden Meadow |
| | 82 Thornden/West Blean Wood |



Our commitment to you:

- A clear definition of the role you will be undertaking.
- Training to carry out your role safely and effectively.
- Friendly supervision and guidance in your role.
- Payment of reasonable travel expenses at 25p per mile or reimbursement of public transport costs.
- A recognition scheme.
- A dedicated team to support you.

Your commitment to us:

- Be a friendly, flexible and supportive team player, adhere to the same standards of behaviour as staff and maintain our values as a positive representative.
- Start on time and tell us if you are going to be late or cannot attend.
- Comply with policies and procedures, especially Health and Safety, take instructions from your Volunteer Supervisor, attend training and meetings and respect confidentiality at all times.
- Disclose any personal or medical matters relevant to your role in confidence.
- Refrain from smoking or the consumption of alcohol or recreational drugs on site.
- Be willing to undergo a DBS check (where relevant).



Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging at Kent Wildlife Trust

KWTG has an EDIB Group - Equity, Diversity, Inclusivity and Belonging. The Group is full of voluntary members who work, alongside their day job, to make KWTG a more inclusive organisation.

We attend training sessions, share knowledge, work with other key departments to make changes to policies and procedures, and collaborate with our comms and engagement teams to maximise the diversity of the audience that KWTG are reaching. The EDIB Group aims to improve the working conditions for all under represented groups, including but not exclusively: disabilities, ethnicity, sexuality, gender, neurodiversity, and religion or belief. We aim to have a member across every team, so all areas of the Trust are represented and working toward the same goal.

This group doesn't stop at staff. The experience of members, donors, and importantly volunteers is also incredibly important.

If you have any feedback or ideas specifically about EDIB and volunteering, please get in touch with the chair of the EDIB Group, Robbie Still either through the volunteering team or robbie.still@kentwildlife.org.uk. We would love to hear around any and all experiences that may help KWTG become a more inclusive and accessible organisation to work with.



Wilder Volunteer Recognition Programme

We value the time and energy of all our volunteers and show our appreciation for the positive impact that you are making through the 7 tiers of recognition:

- New volunteer welcome pack
- Access to a range of discounts including (the discounts listed)
- Featured profiles in the Wilder Volunteer Newsletter
- Celebration themed days and weeks
- Appreciation events
- Milestone achievements
- Wilder Kent Volunteer Awards supported by the Marsh Charitable Trust
- £5 discount on Study Days.
- 10% discount in our Visitor Centres and cafés.
- 20% discount with Cotswold Outdoor, Snow And Rock, Cycle Surgery and Runners Need.



Values and behaviours



We expect volunteers to support our values when volunteering, both by their behaviour and when conversing with members of the public. You are our representative in that situation.

Volunteers who upset others or damage the Trust's reputation will be asked to adjust their behaviour accordingly, followed by verbal warnings or possibly no longer volunteering.

If you feel you are not being supported, you are encouraged to discuss this with your Volunteer Supervisor or a member of the Volunteer Team.

Volunteer administration



Registering as a Volunteer

All volunteers will be asked to **complete an online application form** and the information collected in this form will be used to register individuals. If you are a **young volunteer (aged 17 or under)** we **also require a parental consent form from your parent or legal guardian**. We keep this information securely on our volunteer database and only use it for purposes relevant to your volunteering.

Your application form will be passed to the Volunteer Supervisor and they will contact you to set up a taster session. A taster session is a chance for you to meet your Volunteer Supervisor and understand a bit more about the role before committing to volunteering with us. We want to make sure you fully understand the role as well as enjoy the experience. You can complete up to four taster days before you choose to register as a volunteer.

Only once you have attended a taster session and decided you are happy with the volunteer role will your Volunteer Supervisor contact the volunteer team to ask for you to be registered.

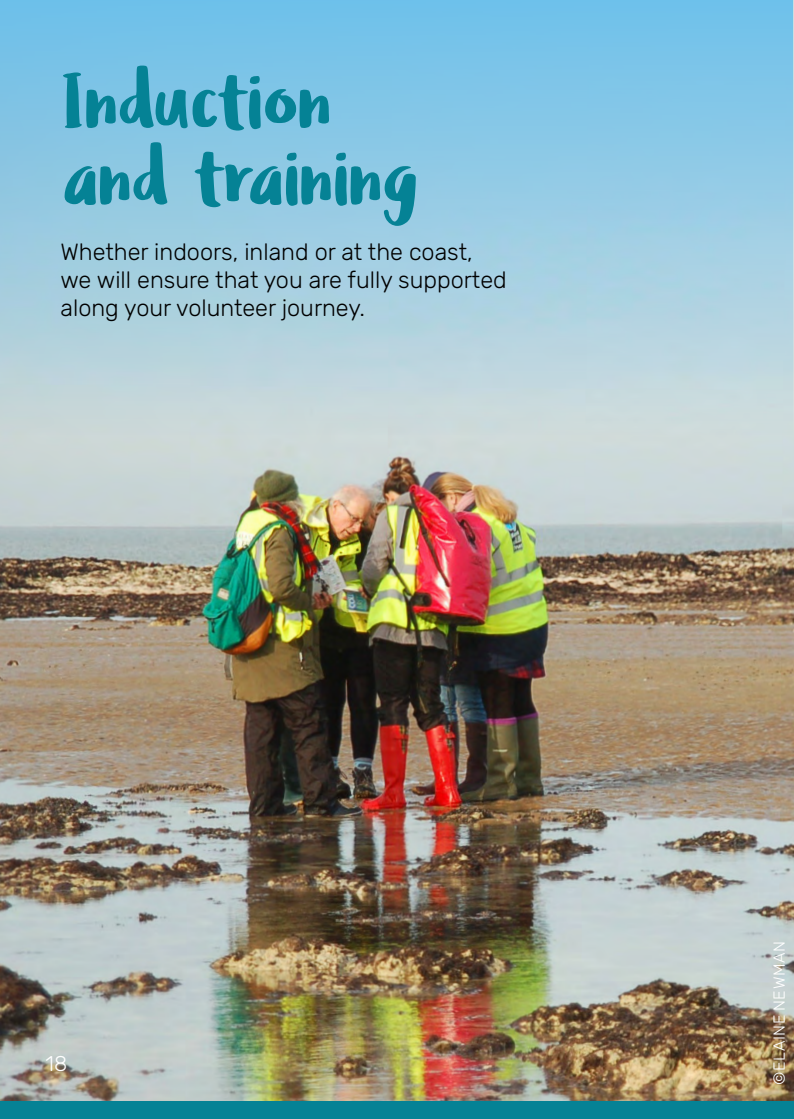
Expenses

We will reimburse volunteers for reasonable travel expenses incurred through their volunteering. The current mileage rate is 25p and is made available to all registered volunteers within the organisation. Travel expenses claim forms should be completed and returned to the Volunteer Team, along with receipts for travel by public transport for volunteers working on core work. Kent Wildlife Trust operates an equal opportunities policy and are keen to ensure that no-one should be precluded from volunteering because of financial reasons.



Induction and training

Whether indoors, inland or at the coast, we will ensure that you are fully supported along your volunteer journey.



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Induction process

When you start, you will receive a role-specific induction led by your supervisor. If specific training is required, it will be specified in the role description. We will always endeavour to have someone on hand to give you further support, advice and help or a refresher (some practical tasks can often be quite seasonal and carried out only a few times per year). If you are unsure about what you are doing, please ask: we are all novices and learners in one way or another!



Meet
the team



On-the-job
training



Real-world
experience



Ongoing
development



Role-specific
induction



Specific
training



Certificate
recording

Training opportunities will be available throughout your time volunteering with us. Common training sessions include First Aid, Manual Handling, Brushcutter, Conflict Resolution and Task Day Leader. We keep records of your training and any certificates will be sent to you directly. If you have relevant qualifications, such as a Chainsaw Licence, we will ask for a copy of these. Once you've started volunteering, if you feel you need further training to fulfil your role, please speak with your Volunteer Supervisor.

Policies and procedures



Where to find them?

All policies and procedure documents can be obtained from your warden or volunteer supervisor. Alternatively you can contact the volunteering team who will be happy to assist.

Accident reporting

All accidents and near-misses, however minor they might appear to be, must be recorded and the report submitted to your Volunteer Supervisor or volunteer contact for escalation as required. All offices and out-posted staff or volunteers will have access to an online accident or near-miss reporting form for you to use.

Signing in

We will record volunteer attendance in line with our Health and Safety policy. The process varies depending

on your role and your team leader will explain this during your induction. Outdoor volunteers also need to check any additional or specific Health and Safety information where relevant, including First Aid arrangements.

Appropriate workwear / PPE

Volunteers must ensure that they are clothed appropriately for their role. If outside, dress for the weather and wear sturdy footwear to prevent slips and falls. Some roles will require you to wear high visibility clothing or Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) that will be provided to you. It is your responsibility to wear all safety items issued to you. If you have any concerns about PPE please raise this with you Volunteer Supervisor or the volunteering team.

Age limits

We do not currently allow any one under the age of 18 to volunteer with us.

Insurance

We have insurance in place for all volunteers providing they are carrying out their role in full knowledge of, and on behalf of, Kent Wildlife Trust, and that they are following the guidelines and procedures outlined for their particular role. We offer:

- Employer's Liability
- Personal Accident Cover
- Public Liability Cover

Note that we do not cover the use of power tools unless a current certificate of competence is held by the volunteer and supplied to Kent Wildlife Trust before commencing the work. You should only carry out work you have been trained to do safely,

and where you feel confident that you can following this training. The work itself must be fully endorsed by the relevant officer. Volunteers who use their own transport are advised to inform their insurance company.

Safeguarding

Kent Wildlife Trust believes that everyone has a responsibility to safeguard children, young people, and adults at risk.

All volunteers are expected to have a basic awareness of safeguarding and the procedure at Kent Wildlife Trust. This includes information on how to recognise and raise a concern, as well as links to the Safeguarding Policy and Procedure. The Safeguarding procedure outlines a clear process for staff, volunteers, and trustees to follow when they have concerns regarding the abuse or neglect of a child, young person, or adult at risk.

Some of our volunteer roles require a Disclosure and Barring Service check and this will be detailed in the volunteer role description. This check must be completed before you can begin your role.

If you have any concerns about the safety, welfare or general wellbeing of a child or adult at risk, please speak to the Safeguarding Team.

Safeguarding Team

Safeguarding Lead

Lee Mason-Baldwin
07747 845375

Safeguarding Officer

Tom White
07485 356866

Volunteer Rep for Safeguarding

Abbie Johnson
07483 015871

All based at Tyland Barn. Contact them at safeguarding@kentwildlife.org.uk

Driving Kent Wildlife Trust vehicles

Some volunteers are required to drive a Kent Wildlife Trust vehicle. This is expected to be done with due care and control. Permission will only be granted to those with a valid reason,

and who are also named on our insurance documentation.

We will:

- Confirm that you are comfortable driving our vehicles.
- Keep a record of your valid licence, including expiration date and any penalty points.
- Check your licence annually, usually in December.

If at any point during your volunteering with us you are banned from driving or are given any penalty points on your licence, you must notify us as soon as possible and before driving any Kent Wildlife Trust vehicles.

Lone working

We want to ensure that our volunteers are safe at all times when they carry out their volunteering, especially if this involves lone working. Your Volunteer Supervisor will have risk assessments in place. They will check that you are happy to work alone and will never make you do something you are uncomfortable doing.

When carrying out a site visit, you should use a buddy system and ensure that someone has a record of where you are. You and your buddy will know how to raise an alarm in emergency situations, as well as keep records of:

- The time you will be volunteering.
- The location of your volunteering work.
- Once your volunteering is safely finished.

Tetanus & Lyme

For those working outside, or with livestock, we strongly suggest that you maintain up-to-date tetanus protection.

Injury is unlikely but there is a small risk with certain activities.

A small minority of ticks in the UK are infected with the bacteria that causes Lyme disease. Being bitten by a tick does not necessarily result in Lyme disease, but you can reduce the risk by covering your skin, using insect repellent and checking your body for ticks or bites.

Data protection

Some volunteer roles involve dealing with personal data about members, employees, trustees and other volunteers. This data could include manual records and filing as well as electronic documents. As a volunteer, you are required to comply with data protection legislation in the course of your duties and to ensure that the Trust's obligations under data protection are upheld. This includes not accessing data to which you are not authorised and to maintain confidentiality and integrity of data. More details are laid out in the Trust's IT Policy which is available upon request.

If you are unclear on these Acts then seek advice from your Volunteer Supervisor before disclosing any details. You could be criminally liable if you knowingly or recklessly disclose personal data in breach of the Act.



Confidentiality statement

Whilst you are volunteering with us you may have access to confidential information relating to Kent Wildlife Trust, volunteers, staff and/or our clients. You must not use or disclose this information to anyone, either whilst volunteering with us or at any time afterwards.

Problem solving procedure

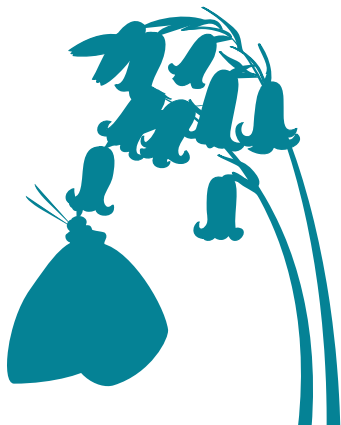
We aim to make the volunteering experience an enjoyable and positive one, where support is available to all volunteers.

The first thing you should do is to talk to your staff contact and arrange a meeting of those involved away from the immediate task. Most issues can be resolved in this way.

If this proves unsuccessful, or you feel the matter is more serious, please contact the Volunteer Team who will mediate between those involved.

If the complaint involves a member of staff we may contact the HR Team.

We hope to resolve any issues in an informal manner; however, very occasionally, there may be situations that occur when we have to follow a formal procedure. The full problem solving procedure for volunteers is available from the Volunteer Team or on on the policies and procedures website page.



Feedback and moving on

Your feedback is valuable to us. If at any time you feel that any aspect of your involvement with us as a volunteer could be improved, please let us know. From time to time, we send out volunteer surveys asking how we're doing. Your help in returning these to us and your honesty is appreciated.

Tell us about your experiences

We are always looking for stories about our volunteers. It might be a 'day in the life of', a description of your role, a volunteer profile or a special achievement. These help us to paint a picture of volunteering for our newsletter, website and member's magazine and crucially to help involve more people through volunteering.

Please get in touch if you'd like to submit a story, photo or video by emailing volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk

Changing Information

If you choose to stop volunteering for Kent Wildlife Trust, or you wish to change contact information, we ask that you inform us at volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk. If you are leaving volunteering, you will be asked to complete an exit survey to help us build on and improve our volunteer programme.

Where to go for help

In most situations, your first contact should be your Volunteer Supervisor or the person supervising you and/or your group. If you are unable to reach them, please contact the wider volunteer team on the below details

☎ **01622 662012** ✉ **volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk**

Your essential contact list

Your Volunteer Supervisor

Name

Telephone

Email

Your Head of Department

Name

Email

The Volunteer Team

☎ 01622 662012 ✉ volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk

Welcome to Kent Wildlife Trust Volunteering


Additional notes






Kent
Wildlife Trust

Volunteer Team

 **01622 662012**

 **volunteering@kentwildlife.org.uk**



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